

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

USCINCSO PRIORITY -

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 018874

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS

SUBJECT: PANAMA REPRESENTATIVE ATTACKS U.S. ON CANAL
PROBLEM

1. IN THE OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL MEETING OF JANUARY 23,
AMBASSADOR PITY OF PANAMA ATTACKED THE UNITED STATES ON
THE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE.

2. IN A BITTER TIRADE WITH QUOTES FROM "OFFICIAL GOP
SOURCES" PITY CHARACTERIZED US POLICY WITH PHRASES SUCH
AS: "A POLICY OF STRANGULATION," "PATERNALISM,"
"COLONIALISM," AND "OPPRESSION." HE DESCRIBED THE ROLE
OF THE PANAMANIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OAS AS ONE OF
"DESTRUCTION OF A POLICY OF ARROGANCE" OF THE UNITED
STATES.

3. DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE WHITE RESPONDED
STATING THAT AMBASSADOR PITY HAS MISUSED THIS FORUM TO
LAUNCH ANOTHER ATTACK ON THE U.S. HE SAID IT WAS
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DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF PANAMA -

A COUNTRY FOR WHICH THE US HAS THE HIGHEST REGARD - WOULD CHARACTERIZE THE U.S. IN SUCH A FASHION. WHITE POINTED OUT THAT DIPLOMATS WHO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES MUST CONSTANTLY STRIVE TO INSURE THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT SPEAKS

WITH ONE VOICE AND IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER AND WITH THE PROPER RESPECT FOR OTHER DELEGATES AND ADDED THAT AMBASSADOR PITY APPARENTLY IS UNDER NO SUCH RESTRICTIONS. WHITE STATED THAT THE PANAMA CANAL IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR HISTORY AND THE NEGOTIATION OF A NEW TREATY IS BOUND TO CAUSE PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND CONTROVERSY. HE CITED SOME MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE CANAL AND QUOTED RELEVANT PORTIONS OF AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S PORTLAND, OREGON SPEECH TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE USG IS CONSCIENTIOUSLY TRYING TO GET THE FACTS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE US REGARDING THE CANAL AND THE ZONE. WHITE SAID THAT TO MAKE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES AT A TIME WHEN PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE REACHING FOR THE LAST STAGES OF A TREATY IS IRRESPONSIBLE. HE CLOSED WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT IF THE US AND PANAMA ARE SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING A TREATY IT WILL BE IN SPITE OF SPEECHES SUCH AS THAT GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR PITY AND NOT BECAUSE OF THEM.

4. PREDICTABLY PITY RESPONDED BY DESCRIBING RESPONSE AS "IGNORANT" AND "BLACKMAIL". WHITE REPLIED STATING THAT HE HAD DELIVERED A MEASURED STATEMENT DESIGNED TO DISPELL FALSE IMPRESSIONS GIVEN BY PITY. HE SAID THERE WAS NOT THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF "BLACKMAIL" IN THE STATEMENT AND THAT A READING OF THE RECORD WOULD BEAR THIS OUT.

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